



Joint Commission on Technology and Science

October 13, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

Pocahontas Building, House Committee Room

<http://dls.virginia.gov/commission/jcots.htm>

The Joint Commission on Technology and Science (the Commission) met in Richmond with Delegate C.E. Cliff Hayes, Jr., chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's meetings webpage](#).

Presentation: SVT Robotics

A.K. Schultz, CEO, SVT Robotics

Mr. Schultz presented on SVT Robotics, a company based in Norfolk that deploys warehouse robotics systems based on software technology. He said the company is "like Bluetooth for robotics." SVT Robotics is currently in the planning process for securing a 60,000-square-foot location to gather over 100-plus robotics companies in one central hub to serve as a "never-ending trade show." The goal is to create a robotics hub centered on the logistical center of Hampton Roads to attract talent and capital to the region. Members asked about the feasibility of remote work. Mr. Schultz noted that while some aspects of the job can be done remotely, things like brainstorming are best done in person. Mr. Schultz also highlighted that SVT Robotics has and is currently attracting interns from universities and high schools in the Hampton Roads area. He noted that tech talent in Virginia usually leaves for big tech cities such as Boston and Austin. However, the presence of small companies attracts both the tech talent and larger tech companies to other cities, he said. He cited Pittsburgh and its recent success becoming a hub for artificial intelligence and self-driving cars spurred by Carnegie Mellon University and the growth of smaller companies in the area. Members underscored better promotion of current tools such as the economic partnership and Commonwealth talent accelerator available to promote startups in the Commonwealth. Mr. Schultz concluded by highlighting access to national capital, affordable talent, affordable infrastructure (rent, utilities, etc.), direct flights to Norfolk, and access to grants and subsidies as essential to attracting tech talent to the Commonwealth.

Advisory Committee Final Reports

Senator Barbara A. Favola, chair, Children's Online Protection Advisory Committee

The Children's Online Protection Advisory Committee (the Advisory Committee) was briefed on several bills² referred to JCOTS from the 2020 session. The Advisory Committee also considered the recently passed Virginia Consumer Data Protection Act (the Act) and wanted to flag the monetary penalty and fines mechanisms for consideration by the Consumer Data Protection

¹ **Members Present:** Delegate C.E. Cliff Hayes, Jr. (chair), Senator Adam P. Ebbin (vice-chair), Senator John A. Cosgrove, Jr. (virtual), Senator Barbara A. Favola (virtual), Senator Ghazala F. Hashmi, Senator David W. Marsden (virtual), Delegate Terry L. Austin, Delegate Hala S. Ayala (virtual), Delegate Kathy J. Byron (virtual), Delegate Kenneth R. Plum

Members Absent: Delegate Glenn R. Davis, Delegate Danica A. Roem

² HB 952, 955, and 956 (2020 Session)

Work Group. Senator David W. Marsden noted there will be some refinement in the enforcement section this upcoming session to allow the Attorney General greater breadth in enforcing the Act before it goes into effect in 2023. Senator Favola concluded by thanking the members of the Advisory Committee for their efforts.

Delegate Hayes, chair, Facial Recognition within Law Enforcement Advisory Committee

Delegate Hayes reported on the work of the Facial Recognition within Law Enforcement Advisory Committee. The issue was referred to the JCOTS prior to the introduction of the Act. The issue was removed from consideration from this bill and the topic was referred to JCOTS for further study. On a parallel path, Delegate Lashrecse D. Aird introduced HB 2031. The bill put a moratorium on law enforcement purchasing and deploying facial recognition technology unless expressly authorized by statute. As a result, legislative options have been put on hold. After the upcoming session, JCOTS will study the issue to carve out narrow exceptions as needed.

Next Meeting

The Commission's next meeting will be held after the upcoming session of the General Assembly.

For more information, see the [*Commission's website*](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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